

DAILY BULLETIN

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BUSH, SCHROEDER CALL ON IRAN TO GIVE UP NUCLEAR AMBITIONS

Also reiterate that Syria must withdraw all forces from Lebanon

President Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called on Iran February 23 to give up its nuclear weapons program.

In a joint news conference after their meeting in Mainz, Germany, Bush and Schroeder also said Syria must withdraw not only its troops but also its secret services from Lebanon.

Regarding Iraq, climate change and NATO, the two leaders said they focused during their talks on areas of agreement rather than past disagreements.

Concerning Iran, Bush said that, while the United States, Germany, France and Great Britain "will continue to talk tactics," the objective is clear and shared: "Iran must not have a nuclear weapon. For the sake of security and peace, they must not have a nuclear weapon," he said.

Schroeder concurred. "We absolutely agreed that Iran must say 'no' to any kind of nuclear weapon, full stop," he said.

Bush said it is "vital that the Iranians hear the world speak with one voice," and he noted that the reason for the current discussions is that Iran was "caught enriching uranium after they had signed a treaty saying they wouldn't enrich uranium These discussions are

occurring because they have breached a contract with the international community.”

He added that “there’s another demand that makes sense, as well, and that is that the Iranian government listen to the hopes and aspirations of the Iranian people.”

On Syria, Bush noted that France and the United States are seeking a U.N. resolution to force withdrawal of Syrian troops and secret services from Lebanon in the wake of the recent assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Bush also said that the upcoming elections in Lebanon “need to be free, without any Syrian influence.”

Schroeder added that the United States and Germany would like to see an international investigation into the death of Hariri.

“The charge is out there for the Syrian government to hear loud and clear,” said Bush. “And we will see how they respond before there’s any further discussions about going back to the United Nations.”

On Iraq, Schroeder referred to the U.S.-German disagreement over the campaign to remove Saddam Hussein but said “that is the past.” He added that “now our joint interest is that we come to a stable, democratic Iraq.”

He said Germany would, in addition to training Iraqi police and security staff in the United Arab Emirates, make available German expertise on the rebuilding of democratic institutions if the Iraqi government should request it.

Bush, thanking Germany in his opening remarks for its contributions in Iraq, added, “I fully understand the limitations of German contribution. However the contributions that Gerhard Schroeder talked about are not limited, they’re important.”

Bush called Germany “a partner” with which the United States shares common goals.

He also said, when reiterating U.S. support for a united Europe, that “for Europe to be a strong, viable partner, Germany must be strong and viable, as well. And in order for us to have good relations with Europe, we must have good relations with Germany.”

When asked about his recent proposals for NATO reform and how those ideas differ from the U.S. view, Schroeder

responded that he and Bush “have agreed that we are not going to constantly emphasize where we’re not agreeing, but we want to focus on where we do agree.”

Schroeder said he believes “we’re jointly of the opinion that it is necessary to take NATO and the European Union, both of them, and to make them into a forum for important international transatlantic positions.”

Bush said he interpreted Schroeder’s comments “to mean he wants NATO to be relevant, a place where there is meaningful strategic dialogue.” He added that he “appreciated the spirit in which those comments were made.”

Schroeder also expressed appreciation for the U.S. commitment to the Middle East peace process. Bush in turn said he assured Schroeder that “a primary objective of my administration is to help move the [Middle East peace] process along.”

Because peace “is within reach, it is vital for all of us ... to work together to help both parties achieve the two-state solution -- two states living side by side in peace,” Bush said.

BUSH EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN IRAN

United States stands “ready to assist”

President Bush expressed his “sincere condolences” for the loss of life and suffering caused by the February 22 earthquake in the Iranian province of Kerman, and said the United States stands ready to assist the people of Iran in responding to this tragedy, according to a February 23 White House statement.

Following is the text of the statement:

THE WHITE HOUSE
(Mainz, Germany)
February 23, 2005
Statement by the Press Secretary

On behalf of the American people, the President expresses his sincere condolences for the loss of life and suffering caused by yesterday’s earthquake in the Iranian

province of Kerman. Our thoughts and prayers are with those families and individuals who lost loved ones. The United States stands ready to assist the people of Iran in responding to this tragedy, and we will be in contact with the Government of Iran to offer concrete help

BUSH ADMINISTRATION EXPRESSES CONCERNS OVER ARMS SALES TO CHINA

Stage set for productive discussions with Europe, official says

The United States and Europe have “set the stage” for productive discussions over the European Union’s proposal to lift an embargo on arms sales to China imposed after the 1989 crackdown by Chinese authorities on pro-democracy activists in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square.

Speaking en route to Mainz, Germany, February 23 before President Bush’s meeting with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder, a senior Bush administration official said the United States is “well aware of the nature of the discussions” by European Union (EU) members on lifting the embargo, but that the United States has both human rights and security concerns with regard to the issue.

The official said that since 1989 there have been “no improvements in human rights to -- in our view, justify a change in policy,” citing the fact that as many as 2,000 pro-democracy activists still remain imprisoned in China.

Secondly, the official said a lifting of the arms embargo would change the military balance in the Pacific region “in ways that might put ... American military personnel at risk.”

“We have a problem; the Europeans understand the depth of the problem,” the official said, adding that EU leaders have “underlined” their December 2004 commitment that “any lifting of the embargo would not lead to a qualitative or quantitative increase in arms being sent to China.”

“[W]ithout suggesting in any way that we’re going to change our position of opposition to the embargo, we are

willing to hear how the Europeans intend to make their political commitment a reality,” the official said.

Also speaking en route to Mainz, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan said the Bush administration appreciates Australia’s decision to commit 450 extra troops to coalition efforts in Iraq, as well as additional contributions by countries such as Georgia and Romania.

SNOW WELCOMES WORLD BANK FUND REPLENISHMENT AGREEMENT

Treasury secretary praises focus on grants, effectiveness, transparency

U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow has welcomed a preliminary agreement on funding and reforming the World Bank’s assistance program for least-developed countries.

In February 22 remarks to an International Development Association (IDA) replenishment meeting in Washington, Snow lauded reforms outlined in the agreement, including making more funds available in the form of grants, putting more emphasis on measurable results, and moving toward more openness and effectiveness.

IDA is the arm of the World Bank that provides interest-free loans and grants to the world’s poorest countries.

Snow said that making grants a bigger part of IDA’s programs is a “crucial” step toward putting poor countries on a sustainable path.

The United States, one of the largest IDA’s contributors, has urged the World Bank to move from low-interest loans to grants. It has argued that lending to already indebted countries does not make sense because IDA often forgives those loans anyway when debtor countries fail to pay the money back.

Under the new agreement that covers the next three years, the grants’ share in total disbursements will increase from 25 percent to about 30 percent, according to a World Bank news release issued on the same day.

Snow said he also is encouraged by the agreement's focus on greater use of performance indicators in the evaluation of projects funded by the World Bank. These and other efforts will improve the effectiveness and accountability of IDA's development assistance, he added.

In addition, Snow hailed a plan to make World Bank operations more transparent.

The World Bank's largest donors agreed to raise their contributions to IDA by 25 percent, increasing total assistance resources to \$34 billion, according to the release. The U.S. financial commitment to the fund must be approved by Congress.

U.S., EUROPE SHARE GOALS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Under Secretary Dobriansky, CEQ Chair Connaughton write letter to editor

(This letter to the editor by Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton appeared in the International Herald Tribune February 19 and February 22. There are no republication restrictions.)

Our common agenda

In addressing important priorities for developing nations and the long-term risk of global climate change, the policies and objectives that the United States and Europe share far outweigh any differences we may have.

In 2002, President George W. Bush underscored the seriousness of climate change, pledging to "work with nations, especially the poor and developing nations, to show the world that there is a better approach, that we can build our future prosperity along a cleaner and better path."

Later that year, at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, world leaders, including representatives from the United States, agreed to work for better water and sanitation, increased access to modern energy sources, better public health, more productive agriculture and improved protection and management of natural resources.

The United States believes effective policies that work toward these shared aims will improve energy security and promote economic development, and reduce poverty, air pollution and greenhouse gases.

The common U.S.-European agenda has led to many achievements.

In 2001, we launched the Generation IV International Forum, which works with European nations to develop the next generation of nuclear power, which will be safer, more affordable, and more proliferation-resistant.

Last July, Italy and Britain joined America in starting the Methane to Markets Partnership, which enables developing countries to capture and profitably re-use methane waste. Major developing countries like China, India and Mexico are participating.

Through the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum and the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy, the United States and Europe are striving to perfect carbon capture and storage, and make hydrogen fuel cell vehicles commercially available by 2020. The United States, the EU and others are also working toward emissions-free, fusion energy.

America is committed to reducing the amount of greenhouse gases produced per dollar of GDP by 18 percent by 2012. These efforts, combined with other programs, \$5 billion in science and technology research and development, and more than \$4 billion in tax incentives, will spur deployment of advanced technologies, with the potential for large reductions in greenhouse gas.

Our domestic actions mirror similar policies at work throughout the world, from the implementation of clean coal technologies in the United States, to the widespread adoption of nuclear power for electrical generation in France and Japan, to the shift to biofuels in Brazil.

Policy measures that act upon our international development and environmental goals in tandem promise far greater results, with critical implications for the living standards of billions of people. And our cooperative efforts are just the beginning.

Paula J. Dobriansky and James L. Connaughton, Washington